

Of TEMPTATION,
AND THE *N^o 4.*
Means to Prevent its Prevalence.

A
SERMON
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O F T E M P T A T I O N ;

A N D T H E

Means to Prevent its Prevalence.

M A T T H. xxvi. † 41.

Watch and Pray, that ye enter not into Temptation.

WHILE we are surrounded with so many *Temptations*, and exposed to so much Danger by means of them ; and while we may continually observe such Numbers of Professing Christians drawn into Sin by the Prevalency of Temptation, I know of no Advice more suitable and proper for such an Assembly as this, than that which the Words of the Text contain : And I doubt not, but you will think so too, when you have consider'd a little *those* Words they are, to *Whom* they were spoken at first, what was the special *Occasion* on which this Advice was given, and what is the *Import* of it.

THEY are the Words of *CHRIST* himself, as appears from the Context : Of Christ, who fully understands the Nature and the Condition of Man ; where his *Weakness* lies, and whence his *Danger* comes : Who are the *Enemies* by which he is opposed, and what their *De-*

signs against him are : What it is to be *tempted*, having suffered himself that way ; and what are the *Proper Means* of resisting and over-coming it, having used them himself with the greatest Success. They are the Words of Christ, who is too *Wise* to direct to any thing unnecessary and of no Use : too *Just* to prescribe any thing unreasonable, and not fit to be done : too *Good* to oblige to any thing hurtful, or that might not promote their Wellfare who obey his Commands.

THE Persons to Whom he delivered them at first were some of his own Disciples, as we find by the Verse that immediately preceeds ; *Peter*, to whom he more directly speaks, and the others, who were present with him, in *Gethsemane* : Persons who were distinguish'd from him from the rest of the World, to whom he had the greatest Regards, and whose Interests lay the nearest to his Heart, as appears from the Account that this very Chapter contains, of what had past betwixt himself and them. Which serves to assure us, that his Instructions to these Persons did proceed from a tender Concern for them and a gracious Design to render them happy. And as they were the *Favourites* of Christ, so they were the *Professors* of that Day. They had chosen Christ for their Lord, embark'd themselves with his Interests, and were resolved to stand by him to the End of their Lives whatever it cost them. Peter said unto him

Ver. 35.

Though I should die yet will I not deny thee likewise also said all the Disciples : And yet

the blessed Jesus saw there was abundant Reason to exhort even such, to watch and pray, that they enter not into Temptation ; and who then shall presume to think himself above the Advice ?

INDEED the Disciples had *special Occasion* for this at this Time ; for though they had zealously expressed their good Designs, their honest Resolutions to adhere to their Lord ; yet they discover'd how little Apprehension they had of their Danger, and their great Insensibility how weak they were in themselves, and where their true Strength was to be found. They were guilty of

sinful

ful and foolish Confidence in themselves, and Self-confidence is sure to prove fatal in the Issue. No soon- had they betrayed their Presumption and Vanity this y, but they presently gave Cause to their distressed Lord, (who had commanded Ver. 38. them to watch with him) to reprimand and Ver. 40, 45. braid them with their Neglects of his

person, and their Disobedience to his Command. *He keth unto the Disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith to Peter, What ! could ye not watch with me one Hour ?* Now, while he found them in such a Frame as this, he knew that a terrible Trial was about to befall them, shocking Temptation just coming on, that would give the Devil, the World, and their *weak Flesh* very great advantages against them. Their Master was about to be betrayed into the Hands of Sinners, by one of their number ; to be exposed to great Indignities, and a barbarous Treatment from the Magistrates, and the meaner people both : That every body would be ashamed or afraid to own him : they would see him accused, condemned, forsaken by his Friends, nailed to a Cross, and expiring there : After which they would be assaulted by a long Series of Temptations and Trials.

UPON this Occasion it is, that our Lord exhorts them in the Text, *Watch and Pray, that ye enter not into temptation.*

WHEREIN he suggests their *Danger*, and then directs them to the proper *Means* for preventing it.

HE suggests their *Danger*, and that is, lest they should enter into *Temptation*. Temptation * in the general signifies Trial, whether it be made by GOD, by the Devil, or any other ; as I shall more fully observe anon : but it is commonly understood of such Trial as endangers a man's falling into Sin ; and is design'd most strictly for any Incentive or Solicitation to it. *To enter into Temp-*

* Πειρασμός, πειράζειν is to make Trial or Proof of Person or thing.

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tation, is not barely to be tempted, to undergo a dangerous Trial, or to meet with Incentives and Sollicitations to Sin: For it is plain, by what our Lord foretells his Disciples, and by the Event, that an unavoidable Temptation was coming upon them; an Hour that would prove a dangerous Trial to their *weak Flesh*, and from which the Devil might take Occasion to incite and solicit them to sin. That by *entring into Temptation*, we are to understand the consenting with it, and falling by Means of it.

TO prevent which he directs *to the proper Means*, in these Words, *Watch and Pray*; the former of which imports, that they have a due Apprehension of their Danger, and do their uttermost to escape it; not the Temptation it self, but the Sin to which it might prove an Inducement: While the other implies that they are not sufficient of themselves, and therefore with all their other Diligence and Care, are to be earnest in imploring the Assistance of GOD and his Grace.

NOW tho' this Exhortation was given to the Disciples upon such an extraordinary Occasion, yet our Lord design'd it as *standing Counsel* to them, and to all their Followers, in every Age of the World, and in the ordinary Course of their Lives: For the Reason on which it is made, reaches to every Christian, in whom, tho' the *Spirit be willing, the Flesh is weak*. That every one stands in need of the same Advice, because every one stands exposed to Temptation, and is in Danger of *entring into it*, thro' the Weakness of the Flesh; and therefore it must concern all to be on their Guard, and to entreat the Aids of GOD and his Grace, that they may not give place to Temptation: Accordingly our Lord, and the inspir'd Apostles after him, do often repeat Instructions

like this; and Christ does expressly tell his Disciples upon another Occasion, *What Mark 13. ult. say unto you, I say unto all, Watch.*

THUS I am led to insist on the following Truth as the Subject of this Discourse, *viz.*

IT is necessary Advice for all Professing Christians themselves, that they use the proper Means to prevent the Prevalence of those Temptations they are exposed to.

IN speaking to which I shall,

- I. DISCOURSE *more generally* of those Temptations to which Professing Christians stand exposed.
- II. CONSIDER a little the proper Means for Preventing the Prevalence of those Temptations.
- III. SHOW how necessary the Advice is for Professing Christians themselves, that they use these Means with that Design.
- IV. CONCLUDE with the Improvement of the whole, wherein there will be Occasion to point you to some particular Temptations and Sins, that it greatly concerns you to Watch and Pray against.

I. I SHALL discourse *more generally* of those Temptations to which Professing Christians stand expos'd. NOW Temptations are of Two Sorts.

First, SUCH as are designed for our Good, and are apt to promote it.

Secondly, SUCH as tend to endanger our Souls by drawing us into Sin.

First, SUCH as are design'd for our Good, and are apt to promote it. And these are no other than Afflictions and Offerings, which may serve to try and improve our several Graces; our Faith, Patience, Resignation, Constancy, &c. and to render us Examples and Encouragements to others: That by Means of these we become instrumental in glorifying GOD, and doing Good unto Men. Of this sort of Temptation St. James speaks

us, My Brethren count it all Joy when ye fall Chap. i. 2.

to divers Temptations, q. d. Rejoyce great-

in your Afflictions, not for their own sakes, but for the sake of the blessed Fruits they produce, such as the strengthening your Faith, and working Patience: Upon which Accounts

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- counts he pronounceth him a blessed Man who endureth Temptation. In this Sense St. Peter tells the Christians, That for a Son if need be ye are in heaviness through manifold Temptations; which he elsewhere calls a Fiery Trial, or as those Words may be literally render'd, a * fiery Exploration or Temptation. That in this Sense GOD himself is said to tempt Men. Thus we read, God tempt Abraham, i. e. He try'd the Strength of his Faith and Obedience by that afflictive Service he call'd him to, so as to make it abound to Abraham's great Advantage and his own Glory. Several of the Hebrew Doctors observe, that in this Sense GOD tempted him ten Times. Thus Deut. 8. 2. is said to have tempted the Israelites; Ver. 16. led them Forty Years in the Wilderness to humble them, and to prove, or to † tempt them, as some English Translations read it.

THAT such Temptations as these could not be sign'd by our Lord in the Text. He had foretold his Disciples of many Afflictions and Troubles that were to fall them, and were just coming upon them. Affliction is the common Lot of Christians in all Ages; who are to take up their Cross and to follow Christ, and to pass thro' many Tribulations into the Kingdom of GOD: Who are forewarn'd, If they will abide faithfully in Christ Jesus they must suffer Persecution: But assuredly also, That all these Things shall work together for their Good. It's true indeed, the Devil and a corrupt Heart may misimprove this Part of the Divine Conduct, and take Occasion from their Afflictions and Troubles, to tempt and solicit Men to such Sins as Impatience and Discontent, repining and murmuring against GOD and his Providence; Curse GOD and die. They may tempt to Sin as a Means to get free from some of them; for by making

* Πύρωσις περὶ πειρασμῶν. † ἵνα πειράσῃ σὲ. ver. 16. ἵνα ἐκπειράσῃ σὲ.

Shipwreck of Faith and a good Conscience, and becoming Apostates, Men may sometimes escape Persecutions and sufferings of several Sorts; and when this is the Case, we have reason to watch and pray that we enter not into these Temptations; and that we may stand in the evil Day. But when the Devil and a corrupt Heart turn these Things into Occasions and Seducements to Sin, then they belong to the Other Sort of Temptations, and will be taken Notice of under the Second Head, to which I proceed.

Secondly, SUCH as tend to endanger our Souls by drawing us into Sin. In this Sense the Scripture frequently speaks of Temptations, and this is what we more commonly mean by that Word: As when we pray that GOD would not lead us into Temptation: Mat. 6. 13. and when St. Paul exhorts the stronger Gal. 6. 1. Christians to restore those who are overtaken with a fault in the spirit of Meekness, considering themselves, lest they also be tempted: And when he observes, That they who will be Rich fall into Temptation and a Snare. Here are meant the Seducements, Solicitations, and Incentives to Sin: That to tempt in this Sense, is to perswade, entice, excite, and endeavour to draw into it; and so GOD tempts no Man. Let no Man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of GOD, for GOD cannot be tempted with Evil, neither tempteth he any Man: By which you may see how this Text is to be reconciled with those others, wherein GOD is said to tempt Men.

BUT there are Three Grand Enemies of our Souls, who are very active in this sort of Temptation, and who have Ways of managing it, peculiar to each; as well as some that are common to all; these are the *Flesh*, the *World*, and the *Devil*. For we read in Scripture, That every Man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own Lust and enticed: Of a Time of Temptation with respect to the *World*; and of the Temptation of the *Devil*.

James 1. 14.

Luke 8. 13.

Luke 4. 13.

B

(1.) FOR

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(1.) FOR the *Temptations of the Flesh*: By which we are to understand our own naughty Hearts, or our Natures as corrupt and depraved, which the Scriptures frequently term *Flesh*: The Temptations of which are those latent Corruptions, and vicious Inclinations and Affections within, which prompt Men to sin, and seduce them into the Commission of it: All those irregular and inordinate Appetites that we find within our selves, and are call'd the *Lusts of the Flesh*, and the *Desires of the Heart and Mind*, consider'd as Carnal; by which Sinners are said to be *drawn away and enticed*. Particularly, *An inordinate Love to the Things of the World*, and *eager desires after them*; which come under various Denominations from the several Objects on which they fix; as, an excessive Love of Fame, of Honour, of Esteem and Applause from Men, is styl'd *Ambition*, and proves a dangerous Temptation, apt to precipitate Men into many a fatal Course, and to prevail with them to sin against their Convictions and Light: As it did with those *chief Rulers* amongst the *Jews*, who tho' they believed on Christ, (being convinc'd in their Consciences that he

John 13.
42, 43.

was the Messiah) yet would not confess him because they loved the Praise of Men more than the Praise of GOD.

AN insatiable Thirst after Wealth and Riches is *Covetousness*; the Objects of which are call'd by the Apostles the *Lusts of the Eyes*, because while worldly-minded Men behold them with their Eyes, they greedily covet or lust after them; which appears to be a fatal Temptation to

1 Tim. 6. 9,
10.

Multitudes, who, in the Apostles Phrase will be Rich. They that will be Rich fall into Temptation and a Snare, and into many foolish and hurtful Lusts which drown Men in Destruction and Perdition: For the Love of Money is the Root of all Evil, while some coveted after they have erred (or been seduced from the Faith, and pierced themselves through with many Sorrows. This is a Temptation that betray

2 Tim. 4. 10.

Men into innumerable Sins and Follies: As was this carry'd off Demas from the Apostle after

After he had made an eminent Profession, *He loved this present World.*

A N eager desire after sensual Pleasures is termed *Vorptuousness*, and is, more strictly speaking, the Lust of the Flesh; than which, there is not a more threatening Temptation, when Men become *lovers of Pleasure more than lovers of GOD.*

ALL these inordinate Appetites urge Men to numberless vile and sinful Attempts to satiate and gratifie them, to fulfill the Will of the Flesh; when they are said in Scripture to *go after their own Hearts Lust, to walk in their own Counsels, &c.*

BUT besides this dangerous *Love* to worldly Good, there are also *inordinate Aversions and Fears with respect to Evil*: Which prove to some as great Temptations of the Flesh as the former. How strong are its *Aversions* to suffering and Pain, to Disgrace and Reproach, to Poverty and Want? And what excessive *Fears* are wont to spring from thence? Now their mighty *Aversion* to these Things exposes Men to many Sins when they actually suffer by them; and their extravagant *Fears* are great Temptations when they apprehend and imagine the Evil is coming. It is from these Temptations within, that those from Abroad derive all their Efficacy and Force; I mean such as will be recounted under these following Heads.

(2.) THERE are the *Temptations of the World*; where by the World I mean both the Men and the Things of it. 1st. *THE Men of the World.* Whose Temptations are offer'd, either in a way of direct and down-right *Perswasion*, or in the more oblique way of *Example* and *Pattern*.

SOMETIMES by *direct Solicitation and Perswasion* to sin: Of which we have an Instance in these Words of Solomon: *My Son, if Sinners entice thee, consent thou not; if they say come with us, let us* Prov. I. 10, *may wait for Blood; let us lark privily for the* II, 13, 14. *innocent without cause.* — *We shall find all Precious Substance, we shall fill our Houses with Spoil, cast*

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in thy Lot amongst us, let us have one Purse, &c. The
the Harlot subtil of Heart tempts the young
Chap. 7. Man void of Understanding. Thus Joseph
was tempted by his Mistress; and Christ by
an Apostle, whom he calls by the Devil's Name, because
he then acted the Devil's Part; *Get thee behind me Satan*.
For such Tempters as these are the Devil's Agents, and
Factors for Hell; who having first *entred into Temptation*
themselves, are industrious to draw others into it, that
they may have the Pleasure of Company in sinning, and
that the greater Number of Associates may give the more
Countenance to their Sins.

AT other Times the Temptation is offer'd in the more
oblique way of Example and Pattern. Examples have a
strange insinuating Force, and insensibly gain a Confor-
mity to them; especially the Examples of Numbers
and of the greater Part; for from thence arises the
Fashion, and the prevailing Custom of the Times.
Things of wonderful Efficacy with weak and foolish
Minds, who are wont to be carried down the Stream
and to follow the Multitude; which may be the Reason

that Prohibition in the Law, *Thou shalt not*
Exod. 23. 2. *follow the Multitude to do Evil.* The Exam-
ples of Superiors have a peculiar Influence
on those who are beneath them. Not only a Court, but
a whole Nation becomes debauch'd, when the Prince is
notoriously so. *Regis ad Exemplum* ——. Children
and Servants are strangely drawn into an Imitation of
their Parents and Masters. But no Example prevails
more than that of Chosen Companions: While they gain an
Interest in our Esteem and Affection, and their Conver-
sation proves very agreeable, we unavoidably learn to
talk and act in the manner that they do; for which Reason

that wise Instructor exhorts the young
Prov. 4. 14. Man not to enter into the Path of the Wicked,
nor to go in the Way of evil Men: For though
they do not directly solicit to Sin, yet their Example is a
greater Temptation than such are generally aware of.
But,

ldly, BY the World we are also to understand the Things
it; both its Good and its Evil Things: These are the In-
ements and Fuel to those Passions and Lusts of which I
ve spoken.

THE Good Things of the World are its Riches, Ho-
ur, Power, Grandeur, Pleasures; which are strong
entives to many Sins, whether they be possess'd and en-
d, or not.

WHERE they are possess'd and enjoy'd, they frequently
age the Heart, and engross the Affections; and draw-
them off from GOD, become Idols substituted in his
om. They induce Men to place their Trust and Con-
e in them: *To make Gold their Hope; and to say to*
fine Gold thou art my Confidence; to rejoyce supremely
ause their Wealth is great, and because their Hand hath
ten much; so much of what they chiefly value, as
akes them disregard and slight the *better and more endu-*
g Substance, the infinitely more excellent and noble En-
ments. Besides, these Things are apt to incite Men
Pride and an insolent Behaviour, and to some other
s of that Nature. Upon such Accounts as these Solo-
n observes, that *the Prosperity of Fools shall*
roy them: And Agur prays, *Give me not*
thes lest I be full and deny thee: And our
rd represents it as so difficult a Thing for a Rich Man
enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. This where they
e possess'd.

Prov. 1. 32.
Chap. 30. 8, 9.

BUT where they are not they prove alluring Baits, and
up the vicious Inclinations within, and set those inor-
ate Appetites at work which hurry Men into many
ful Excesses in the pursuit of them. This the Devil
all understands, who in his Assaults on our Lord him-
f, *Show'd him all the Kingdoms of the Earth, and the Glory*
them; and said unto him, *All these will I give thee, if thou*
fall down and worship me. It is thro' the subtilty of
e Devil, and the wickedness of Men's Hearts, that
ese Things which GOD designs for the good of the
orld, become the Occasions and Incentives of so much
il.

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THE *evil Things of the World* have also the Nature and Force of Temptations, where they are either felt or fear'd: Such are *publick Calamities and Persecutions* for *Righteousness sake*; for the escaping of which Men have been often in danger of renouncing the Truth and becoming Apostates; as they do who *hear the Word, and with Joy receive it*; but when *Persecution or Tribulation* cometh because of the Word, presently they are offended. This was the Temptation from which the Disciples were in special Danger at present, as I have hinted already. They (as those other Saints of whom the Apostle speaketh *Heb. 11.*) had the Trial, or Temptation, of cruel Mocking and Scourgings, of Bonds and Imprisonment. The Season

wherein these abound are call'd in Scripture *Times of Temptation to fall away*; The Hebrews *Rev. 3. 10.* of Temptation to try them which dwell on the Earth, in which many have fallen away from the Faith. For if Men cannot secure their Religion, and their worldly Interests too by a freedom from Suffering, they forsake the one and cleave to the other.

THERE are *Evils of a more private Nature*, such as Sicknes and Pain, Poverty and Want, &c. that produce Temptations to Sin as well as the former; to great Impatience and Discontent; to base and sinful Compliances to mean and dishonest Trickings and Shifts, &c. and

therefore when Satan was moving GOD against Job, he solicits first that he would dispossess him of all his goodly Possessions

and reduce him to Poverty; and then that he would afflict him with Distemper and Pain; in both which Cases, he roundly asserts that Job would curse GOD to his Face; not doubting but such afflictive Providences as these would betray him into very sinful Inclinations towards GOD. Agur, you know, prays against

a necessitous State, as being attended with Temptation and Snare. Give me not Poverty, lest I steal, and take the Name of GOD in vain.

(3.) THERE are the *Temptations of the Devil*; of which we read a great deal in Scripture, and where he is expressly called *the Tempter*. That we have the fullest Assurance that he is wont to employ himself in such work as this; altho' the precise manner in which he attempts may be very obscure and uncertain to us; as all the Actions of immaterial Beings are, even those of our own Souls so nearly related to us. Undoubtedly he watches for all Opportunities of drawing Men into Sin; observes their Inclinations, and Tempers; and by that means he knows what are the most likely Baits to succeed, which he is careful to have before them, when he perceives the best Occasion for it. When he has once found out the prevailing Lusts of Men (which is easie for him to do) and observes what is their proper Fuel, he is active in improving this to the great disadvantage of his wily Prey. Such Things as these are plainly signified when we read of the *Wiles*, the *Devices*, the *Methods*, the *Snares*, the *Depths of Satan*; and are told that he *worketh about as a roaring Lion seeking whom he may devour*. He works on the Children of Men by those Passions and appetites of which I spoke before, which he sometimes inflames and excites by presenting enticing or terrifying objects: For besides his other Temptations he manages those Two which were last discours'd of. That he sometimes directly solicits and perswades Men to Sin, is plain, from the first Temptation in Paradise, and from his Attempt on our Lord himself; in both which he enforces his Temptations by plausible Arguments, and recommends them with carnal Motives. But whether he carries on his pernicious Designs by immediately applying himself to the Imagination or Fancy, so producing certain Ideas and Images there; or whether he begins with the bodily Organs, and by means of these makes his way to the Imagination, which has its Seat in the Brain, while the Body may be supposed to act on the Bodies of Men, as their own Souls do: Or whether he have a Power of directly communicating Thoughts to the Human Mind (if that be supposed to be really different from what I mention'd

at

at first) I pretend not to determine. This latter seem'd probable enough to some; and while there Societies, and Combinations of *Spirits*, good and bad Angels and Devils, how can these be form'd at first, continued afterwards without a Communication of Them amongst them? And may they not impart them to Souls of Men in the same way in which they communicate them to each other? And have they not special Advantages for this when we remember they are immaterial and not encumber'd with Bodies? It is enough if such Things as these are possible, and I pretend to assert more concerning them: But however it be, the Scriptural Expressions evince that the Devil has an intimate Access to the Minds of Men, at least in some special Cases;

John 13. 27.

Ver. 2.

Acts 5. 3.

there we read that *Satan entred into Judas* and that he put (or * injected) it into his Heart to betray Christ; that *Satan filled the Heart of Ananias*; that he *worketh in the Children of Disobedience*. Whatever be the particular way in which he tempts, we are assur'd of the Thing self in these Expressions; as well as in those other Places that inform us that *Satan provok'd David to number the People*; that Christ was led up *the Spirit into the Wilderness to be tempted of the Devil*; that *Satan had desired to have Jesus that he might sift him as Wheat*: And when the Apostle cautions Christians to beware that *Satan tempt them not*.

1 Chron. 21.

1.

Mat. 4. 1.

ter that he might sift him as Wheat: And when the Apostle cautions Christians to beware that *Satan tempt them not*.

1 Cor. 7. 5.

BUT how far so ever his Power extends, we are assur'd it is not an irresistible, nor invincible Power; and that he is not able to force the Will, and to compel us to Sin as well as to tempt to it: Were it so, we should not be commanded to *resist the Devil*, and assur'd that upon our doing so he will *flee from us*: We should not be taught to *watch and pray that we enter not into his Temptations*. Nor is he at Liberty to assault us as much, and as often as he will; for as his Power is finite and limited, so he cannot

exert it in a way of Temptation, but by Permission from GOD; as appears in the Case of *Job*; and then his temptations will not be charged on us till we entertain consent with them.

proceed to consider,

II. THE proper Means for preventing the Prevalence of these Temptations: And there are Two prescribed by our Lord in the Text, *Watching* and *Prayer*. These are joyn'd in this Exhortation, to teach us, that something is expected from *us*, while we are not to depend on ourselves. We are to *Watch and Pray*, both which include something to be done on our Part; tho' the latter implies our want of special Assistance from GOD to render our own Endeavours successful: This will appear at large while we consider these Things distinctly.

First, FOR *Watching*. It will be evident how proper Means this is, if we consider that it implies both a timely Apprehension and Foresight of Danger, and a prudent solicitude and Care to prevent it.

(1.) A TIMELY *Apprehension and Foresight of Danger*. is opposed to *carnal Security*, which proceeds from a Presumption that all is safe and well, and an unaccountable Inapprehension of the Dangers and Enemies that every where abound. Our Danger is great, because our Enemies are many, and have so much Advantage against us when we are not on our Watch. You have heard of many Temptations we are liable to, and what formidable Adversaries manage them: Formidable indeed on account of their Power, their Subtilty, and their other Advantages. They are in a strict Alliance against us. How ready is the corrupt Heart to forward the fatal Designs of the *grand Destroyer*? How greedy to catch at those baits that the *World* is wont to spread? There is a great variety in the Temptations that threaten us. They are adapted to every Condition of Life, to all the Circumstances we can be in, to every Temper of Mind: That it is altogether impossible to be out of the reach of some or other Temptations while we are in the World. *Those*

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Circumstances of Life, *that* Complection and Temper Mind, *that* Time of Age, and Place of Abode, *that* see to secure us from some, expose the more to other Temptations. It were easie to run thro' the Particulars here *that* this might appear at large; but I must not stay upon the

BUT our greatest Danger is, lest we should enter *in* Temptation; lest we should be prevail'd upon, and induced into Sin. If we escape one and another, with how many more are the Enemies like to assault us? Who may carry their Point by repeating that very Temptation *that* did not succeed afore; and who are sure to have us the Prey if we neglect the proper Means for preventing. This has occasion'd the falling of many into those *hurtful and foolish Lusts that have drowned them in Destruction and Perdition*. And let us consider what our own Case is like to be, if the subtle Tempters finally prevail against us. What miserable Creatures shall we be in this World and how much more so in that which is to come? For they who are drawn off from GOD and their Duty *into the Snare of the Devil*, have GOD for their Enemy; and are Slaves and Vassals to Satan, and must *fall into his Curse and damnation at length, and go away accursed into everlasting Burnings prepared for him and his Angels*. Such is the Danger we are in from Temptation; the Apprehension and Foresight of which is supposed in the Duty of *Watching*; that we are so far sensible of this, as to be duly impress'd by it, and quicken'd to be on our Guard; and this before the fatal Evil seize us, and we are driven away by the Temptation: Such is the *Timely Apprehension and Foresight of Danger*.

(2.) WATCHING implies *a prudent Care and Solicitude to prevent it*. Persons on the Watch are industrious to keep off the Danger they apprehend and fear: And while their Solicitude and Care are under the Direction of Wisdom and Prudence, they take the best Course, and apply themselves to the properest Means with this Design; which are such as these, *viz.*

THEY have a strict and special Regard to that Quarter from which their Danger must chiefly come, and from whence

are threatened the most. We are in danger from a numberless Troop of Temptations; but there are some we have a more special Advantage against us, as being best adapted to *Our Iniquity*; that Sin which may be distinguish'd the *Beloved One*, and which does the most easily beset us, as having on its side a Constitution of Body, a Temper of Mind, a Condition of Life, or some special Opportunities that greatly prompt to it, and urge the Commission of it. Now as ever we would be preserv'd from *falling into the Temptation*, we must have a special Regard to this Sin; observe how the Devil applies to it, what are the Baits that take with it; what the Occasions that stir and excite it, and take the Alarm when they do so.

AGAIN, *They are careful to deprive their Enemies (as far as they can) of what other Advantages they have*: That is, this means they may either avoid their Temptations, or abate the Force of them. And while the Life and Power of Corruption within us, and the Freedom we take with the inviting Occasions and Incentives of Sin without, strangely contribute to the Success of our Enemies: the subduing Corruption within, and reducing its Power, and the keeping our Distance from the Occasions of Sin, must be a proper way to wrest these main Advantages out of their Hands.

IN vain would the World and the Devil tempt, were it not for the latent Corruptions of the Heart; and therefore in vain did they tempt Christ in whom they found nothing of that. But their Hopes and Prospect of success are proportion'd to the Strength and Vigour of the Flesh: That we deprive them of their greatest Advantage when we check and subdue the vicious Inclinations and Appetites that solicit our Consent, and dispose us to compliance with them: Which is done, by Disallowing them; Arguing against them; Refusing to gratify them; withholding the Fuel that feeds them, and constantly exploring the help of Grace against them with such a glow of Affection as flows from a feeling Sense of our want of Divine Assistance. And,

BY keeping our Distance from the Occasions of Sin we shall certainly perceive our Adversaries loosing Ground. By venturing on the uttermost bounds of that which is lawful, or but supposed to be so, many have enter'd into *Temptation*, and sinn'd at such a Rate as they never design'd to have done. A Man on the brink of a Precipice may possibly keep his standing, but it is next to a Miracle if he does so. He that unwarily rushes on the Confiner of Sin, may possibly escape; but to one who has done so, how many Thousands have fallen? The wise and experienced Solomon well understood this, who

Prov. 4. 14.

Chap. 23. 31.

— 5. 8.

cautions Men against going into the way of the Wicked: Against looking on the Wine when it is Red, when it giveth its Colour into the Cup, when it moveth it self aright: Against coming nigh the Door of the strange Woman's House. Suggesting by such Advice, how necessary it is, to keep the greatest distance we can from whatever is like to be an alluring Occasion and Incitement to Sin, and whatever has been wont to prove so to our selves or others.

AGAIN, A prudent Care to prevent the Danger arising from Temptation implies, *A suitable Preparation and Readiness to resist the Enemy when he assaults us.* Now a due Apprehension that one or the other of these tempter Enemies is always at Hand, and a constant Expectation of being beset by them, does greatly contribute to this. A lively Sense of our Duty towards GOD, and of the Nature, and Evils and Danger of Sin, make a considerable part of it. The having our Minds deeply impress'd with some of the most important Principles of the Christian Faith; and with some Scripture Precepts and Rules would bravely furnish us for such Encounters. Such as these, That the LORD searcheth all Hearts; That his Eyes are in every Place, beholding the Good and the Bad: That all Things are naked and open unto him with whom we have to do: That our Life is a Vapour that must soon vanish away: That we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Jesus Christ, and receive according to the Actions done in the Body, whether Good or Evil. What will it profit

Man if he should gain the whole World, its Honours, Profits, Pleasures, and loose his own Soul? &c, &c. These would be the Weapons of our Warfare; and of excellent Use upon these Occasions. Thus was our Lord prepared when the Tempter assaulted him, and his Victory was complete. He fought with the *Sword of the Spirit*. It is written, says he. And he had such principles as these at Hand: *We must not tempt the Lord our GOD: We are to worship him alone, &c.* There are Truths of Religion, and Portions of Scripture proper to oppose to every sort of Temptations; these we should endeavour to retain in our Minds, and imprint on our Hearts, that they may be brought out of that good Treasure as soon as a Temptation advances. To this Purpose does that excellent Prince *Antoninus* advise. (a) *As Surgeons*, says he, *have their Instruments always about them, that they may be ready to assist in case of Wounds received on a sudden; so be you provided with certain Precepts and Rules on Occasions may call for them.* And the (b) *Stoicks* were wont to advise their Followers to fix in their Memories the chief Heads of what they learned in the Schools, that they might have them always at Hand, and ready for use; (c) which *Epiſtetus* accordingly calls *πρόχειρα βοηθήματα*, Helps at Hand, and frequently (d) directs to them. (e) Another observes, that it is better to fix on the Mind, and retain some few comprehensive Rules, or Precepts of Wisdom, that they may be always ready for use, than to

(a) "Ὅσπερ οἱ ἰατροὶ ἀεὶ τὰ ὄργανα καὶ σιδήρεα πρόχειρα ἔχουσιν πρὸς ἀποκρίδια τῶν διεσπασμάτων, ἔτω τὰ δόγματα σύγτοιμα ἔχης —. Rebus suis, *Lib. 3. §. 13. & Lib. 6. §. 48. L. 12. §. 24.*

(b) Solebant Stoici suos monere, ut eorum quæ in Scholis didicerant summa Capita sic memoriæ infingerent, ut illa semper ad manum haberent, & ad omnem Occasionem eis uterentur. *Gatak. in Antonin. Ibid. (c) Idem, ibid.*

(d) Ἐνδεὶς δόγματός ἐστιν ἢ χρεία παρῆν, πρόχειρον αὐτοῦ ἔχειν εἶ —. *Dissert. Lib. 3. c. 10. & Lib. 1. c. 27.*

(e) Plus prodesse si pauca Præcepta sapientiæ teneas, sed illa in promptu tibi & in usu sint, quam si multa quidem didiceris, sed illa non habeas ad manum. *Demetrius Cynicus in Seneca de Benefic. Lib. 7. c. 1.*
learn

learn a great Number, and have them to seek when they will be wanted the most. Such wholesome Doctrines, *Seneca*, (e) should be frequently revolved in the Mind and laid to Heart; that we may not only *know* them, but have them in readiness for every Occasion that calls for them: The want of which occasion'd that complaint from *St. Bernard* (f) so long ago, that this is the Case of the generality of Men, That *those Things which we know when we have no special need of them; we are ignorant of when a great Occasion calls for them.* It would be of excellent use to us, to be prepar'd in such a manner as this to suppress the Temptation in the beginning of it, and have wherewith to answer it at once: And so prevent the danger of entering into a Parley, and listening to the Suggestions of our Adversaries.

Thus of the first Means prescrib'd in the Text, *Watching*; but with this we must joyn the other (for our Lord has put them together) *viz.*

Secondly, PRAYER. Watch and Pray. The former without this will never avail: For we cannot secure ourselves if GOD should abandon us. Prayer implies a Sense of our own Inability to preserve our selves without his Assistance and Help. It is an implicate Acknowledgment that we should be foil'd and overcome, if left to our selves. All our Watchfulness and Care; and all the Arguments and Motives that our best *Reason* can suggest, will be but of little Force against many Temptations, without the supernatural Help of the Spirit of Christ. Should we presume to depend on our own Powers, and go out in our own Strength, we should have sad Experience how weak we are: And if any good Thing remain with us

(e) Reducendus es in Memoriam, non enim reposita Præcepta esse debent, sed in promptu. Quæcunque salutaria sunt, sæpè agitari debent, sæpè versari: Ut non tantum nota sint nobis sed etiam parata. *Epist* 94.

(f) Sic se habent mortalium Corda; quod scimus cum necesse non est, in necessitate nescimus. *Div. Bernard. De Consideratione. Lib. 2. Cap. 1. p. 866. Ed. Lut. Par.*

erwards should greatly bewail our foolish Presumption. The Behaviour of *Peter* before the Temptation, and under it, is recorded as an Instance of this. Heathens themselves could discover what Need there is of Divine Help upon such like Occasions: (g) One speaking of difficult Work and dangerous Encounters, advises to be mindful of GOD, and call upon him as our Helper: And the great (h) *Antoninus* exhorts thus; In every thing that concerns you invoke the Divine Aid: While (i) Another observes, that without the Assistance of GOD a mortal Creature can do nothing. And (k) *Tully* asserts that amongst all the great Men that Greece and Rome produc'd, not one of them had been so nisi juvante Deo, without the Help of GOD.

HERE I shall briefly suggest what should be the Matter of our Prayer in the present Case, and then what sort of Prayer it ought to be.

(I.) AS to the Matter of it; this is express'd in the text: That we may not enter into Temptation.

WE are not to pray that we may not be tempted at all: For such is the Nature of Things, and such our present Condition, that some Temptations are unavoidable, and we cannot expect a compleat Deliverance from them, till we remove to Heaven: Till then the Christian Life must be a Warfare against the Flesh, the World, and the Devil: And a Wise and Gracious GOD serves many excellent Purposes, worthy Himself, by those temptations that his own People are liable to, and sometimes forced to encounter with. I must not enumerate them at present.

(g) Μέγας ὁ ἀγὼν ὅστις, ἴδιον τὸ ἔργον— τῷ θεῷ μέμνησο, εἰνον ἐπικαλῶ βοηθῶν καὶ παραστάτω, ὡς τὸς Διοσκόρους ἐν χειμῶνι οἱ λέοντες. *Arrian*. in *Epictet*. Dissert. lib. 2. c. 18. Idem lib. 3. c. 1. & 22.

(h) Ἐφ' ἅπασιν ὃ θεὸς ἐπικαλῶ. lib. 6. § 23. & § 7.

(i) Οὐδὲν ὃ χεῖς δαίμων σθενεὶ βρότῳ. *Menander*.

(k) Multos & nostra Civitas & Græcia tulit singulares viros, quorum neminem, nisi juvante Deo talem fuisse credendum est. *De orat. Deor.* l. 2. ad finem.

AND the same Reasons discover, that tho' we may pray *earnestly* against an Assault from any extraordinary and violent Temptation, yet we must not pray *absolute* against it. Indeed if we could foresee that such Temptations would certainly hurry us into Sin, then we might be *absolute* in our Petitions against them: Otherwise we must submit it to GOD to determine, whether he will be good to our Souls, and glorify himself by such Temptations; while we know not but even this may be the Event. I will illustrate this by the Instance of *Joseph*; he was expos'd to a more than ordinary Temptation: Take it in all the Circumstances of it, his Deliverance from it is truly wonderful. Now though *Joseph* might have prayed earnestly beforehand against being tempted at such a rate; yet he ought to have submitted the Matter to the Wisdom of GOD: For how much did the Temptation redound to the Glory of his Grace, to the Honour of *Joseph*; and how many other Designs of Providence did it subserve? That though we are to be afraid of Temptation, and ought more earnestly to deprecate the more extraordinary and violent Assaults, yet still it must be with Submission to GOD, and his wise Disposals.

BUT then we are allow'd to be *absolute* in our Requests, that we may *not enter into Temptation*. This we may ask without a Reserve: and in order to this, that GOD would assist us to keep up our Watch, and supply us with Strength sufficient to repel the Force of every Assault: That he would not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able; and that with the Temptation he would make a way for our Escape; so preserving us

from entering into it. Thus Christ tells *Peter* Luke 22. 31. and the other Apostles, when *Satan* had desired to have them, that he might sift them as Wheat, i. e. that he might tempt them, that he had prayed for them: for what? not that they might not be tempted, for sorely tempted they were; but that their Faith might not fail. Such also is the Import of that Petition in the Lord's Prayer, *Lead us not into Temptation*.

I A M to hint,

(2.) W H A T Sort of Prayer it ought to be.

IT must be *Believing* Prayer. *All things*

whatsoever ye shall ask in Prayer believing ye Mat. 21. 22.

shall receive. We must go to G O D ful-

ly perswaded that he is able to deliver us out of Tempta-

tion: And that he is graciously disposed to keep us from

falling, and to give his holy Spirit to them that ask him, who

render us Conquerors, and more than Conquerors, through

him who hath loved us.

IT must be Prayer offer'd up in the Name John 14. 13,

Christ. *Whatsoever you shall ask in my Name* 14.

shall do it. We must add Christ's Name to Christ's

Prayer— *Lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from*

temptation. We are to expect the Blessing on account of the

sacrifice he once offered on Earth, and the Intercession

which continues to make in Heaven.

IT must be *Humble* Prayer: For it implies an Acknow-

ledgment of our own Weakness, of our Proneness to Sin

next to our selves; and the absolute Necessity we have

of Divine Grace, to keep us from falling into it. A

consciousness of our own Unworthiness, the Sinfulness of our

infirmities, and our former Miscarriages, should attend

our Prayer as this, and make us humble.

Finally, IT must be *Fervent* Prayer: Proceeding from

hearts affected with a Sense of the Importance of what

we ask for, and of what mighty Consequence it is that

we receive a Gracious Answer: This will make us pour

forth the Request with great Importunity and Fervency

of Spirit; Oh L O R D, *I beseech thee preserve me from*

falling into Temptation! A Request that it greatly con-

vinces us all to make, as will more fully appear while I

proceed on the *Third General*, which is,

II. T O shew how necessary this Advice is for all
Professing Christians themselves; that they use the
proper Means to prevent the Prevalency of Temp-
tation.

IT will suffice to observe upon this Head the following Particulars:

First, THAT *Professing Christians themselves have a Corrupt Nature as well as others.* They are *Flesh* as well as *Spirit*; and the *Flesh* in them *lusteth against the Spirit*. As there are some Temptations that are its own, so it gives great Advantage to others from whencesoever they come. Our Lord directs the Exhortation in the Text to his own Disciples upon this Reason: *The Spirit*, i. e. the renewed Part, *is willing*, i. e. to resolve well, to resist Temptation, and attend to the Discharge of Duty: *The Flesh*, i. e. the sensitive and corrupt Part, *is weak*, as to be easily over-power'd by a Temptation, and brought to comply with it. That these Words are intended so much as a Mitigation of their Sin, and a way of Apology for them; as a powerful Argument to engage them to the greater Care of *Watchfulness*, and *Fervency in Prayer*. The Corruption of Nature exposes every Christian to the uttermost Hazard, as from himself, so from his other Enemies, whenever he neglects *Watch* and *Pray*. A Fire is very like to break out where the most combustible Matter lies unguarded when Thousands of Sparks are flying about it: Such Danger there is lest an evil Heart left to itself should betray a Man into many a Sin, while a thousand Temptations are at work to enflame his Lusts.

Secondly, IT is evident to Experience, that many Professors fall by Temptation for want of *Watching and Praying*. The Drunkenness of *Noah* and *Lot*; the Murder and adultery of *David*; the Idolatry and other Sins of *Solomon*; the shameful Fall of *Peter*, and the partial Apostacy of all the Disciples, are all to be charged here. Nay, if we look over the grosser Enormities of all the Saints recorded in Scripture, we shall presently see that they are all to be put to the same Account. And if we review the most genuine Confessions of Penitent Sinners in every Age of the World; we shall find that they either expressly acknowledge, or sufficiently intimate, that they want of *Watching and Praying*, as they ought to have done.

one, they fell into those Sins which afterwards cost them dear. Every one of us must acknowledge, I doubt not, that the greatest Faults of our Lives were committed when we have been the least on our Watch, and have restrained Prayer. A Saint of lower Attainments attending to these Duties, will be preserved from the power of such Temptations, as will foil those of greater eminence, when *they* intermit the Discharge of them. Thus *Joseph*, a young Man, being actually on the Watch, and flying from the Temptation, preserves his Innocence; when the more experienced *David*, thro' his own Remissness, foully falls into that very Sin which the Other escaped.

Thirdly, UPON the whole, it is certain, that *those professing Christians will fall by some or other Temptations, who are not careful to watch and pray against them.* What have any now to expect more than all the Professors of succeeding Ages, who upon omitting these Duties have done so? The Flesh is as weak in these as it was in them: and there are still the same active malicious Enemies to take Advantage of *that*, as well as to manage other temptations. He who *beguiled Eve through his Subtilty* many Ages ago, has greater Experience; but no less Subtilty now. Besides, GOD is provoked to leave such themselves in the Hour of Trial, who disobey him by neglecting to use his prescribed Means: Upon which they will certainly fall into Sin, and become a Prey to the Enemies, who lie in wait to deceive them.

Fourthly, SUCH Persons as these *bring much Dishonour to GOD, and Disgrace to their Profession, when a temptation prevails against them and they fall into Sin.* It is an unjust and malicious Practice of wicked Men, to reproach Religion it self with the Sins and Enormities of Professors; as tho' *that* did allow and indulge them in impure and vicious Practice: Whereas it is really for want of acting by its Rules, and living in a Conformity to that some of those who make an outward Profession, prove as vile and sinful as others. Is there not a plain Contrariety betwixt the Laws of Christianity and the

Lives of such Christians. But yet foolish and unreasonable Men will take *Occasion* where there is no *Cause* to reproach Religion, and cast Dishonour on GOD himself and others who will not exercise a Thought on the behalf of These, are very much pleased with those reproachful Reflections that are cast upon them; especially if they also bear hard upon any particular Christians whom they most malign and hate: And by this Means they harden themselves in their Impiety, and strengthen their Prejudices; which redounds to the Dishonour of GOD in the World: That for this Reason, amongst the rest, it is necessary Advice to Professing Christians, that they use the proper Means to prevent the Prevalence of Temptation.

IV. What remains therefore, but that in the last Place I exhort you in particular, as our Lord did his Disciples, *Watch, and Pray, that ye enter not into Temptation?* Frequently review the Temptations that threaten you the most, and be fortifying your selves against them by an Attendance to these things. I shall hint at a few Particulars.

S E T your selves to oppose the Incentives and Sollicitations to Sensuality, and a sinful Indulgence to Pleasures. Take heed to your selves, lest at any time your Heart be overcharged with Surfeiting and Drunkenness. These Sins of the Flesh threaten the Ruin of Soul, Body and Estate.

B E W A R E of a worldly Mind, and the involving your selves in the Cares of this Life, to such a Degree as to leave no competent Time and Leisure for serious Thoughtfulness of Death, a future Judgment, and a Life to come; and for the Discharge of other religious Duties. Take heed to your selves, says our Lord, lest at any Time your Heart be overcharged with — the Cares of this Life; and so that the Day come upon you unawares. And,

L E T me beseech you, my Brethren, to watch and pray, that you be not tempted into a meer Formality in Religion.

Religion, and into spiritual Pride. These are so plainly the Sins of many Professors in our Day, that the greater Care is requisite for keeping our selves from them. Oh! how great is the Number of those who have only a *Form of Godliness*, while they *deny the Power of it*? Some mean trifling Considerations induce Men to take upon them Profession; while many Temptations prevail with them to keep Religion out of their Hearts. Their main Design is to appear to Men to be what in reality they are not: and accordingly they generally discover a greater Concern about the lesser external Matters, and the meer Circumstantials of Christianity; than about those great and weighty Things in which the very Nature and Essence of it does consist. Nor is it seldom that such Persons as these are effectually tempted into great Degrees of *spiritual Pride*: A Vice that abounds to the occasioning a great deal of Trouble in the World, and in the Church of GOD; tho' it is exceedingly odious in the Eyes of all but those who indulge it within themselves.

It is from a more than just Opinion of their own discerning and Judgment, that Men, who might find Work enough within, were they rightly employed, are so free from censuring and condemning the Persons and Actions of others. Hence proceed those conceited invidious Comparisons of Ministers, which are so frequent amongst the younger Professors: And the sitting in Judgment upon them with so much Partiality, and so little Charity: which sometimes improves into a malicious despising and turning those whom they least affect, not without vile Efforts to render them as useless as they can. Thus does their Pride advance them into *the Seat of the scornful*: while it too fully appears from hence that those who are open to gain their Esteem for a little while, have it in some lesser Considerations than that of real and spiritual Advantage receiv'd from their Labours. The more's our Pity!

FROM this Principle proceeds a great deal of that Instancy and Wavering that is to be observed amongst Professors of this Age. Men can find no Ministry good

good enough for them to *continue* under. One pleases best for a short Time, and then another, who is soon exchang'd for a third: And 'tis well if in a little while any can be found who will please: Or if a *Dispensation* be not wanted, and these Men advanced above Ordinances, being grown wiser than ALL the Teachers.

THUS I have known it to have been with some my Time.

BUT these are not the only Off-spring of this profane sick Vice. *Spiritual Pride* is the Parent of many of the high Pretences to greater *Orthodoxy* than the Pretence will allow to Multitudes of those who have as clear Heads as themselves to search into Truth, as good and honest Hearts to love and adhere to it, and who as sincerely and earnestly desire the Spirit of GOD to lead them into it. And at the same time allow that this may be the Cause of those other Good Men who in some Things differ from them. But the *Conceited Professor* complies with the Temptations (whatever they are) to slander every Man and every Body of Christians, whom he suspects of not coming up to his Measure of Thinking. They are not, *He*, sound in the Faith; but are seized with such a sort of an Intellectual Plague as, he suggests, will certainly infect you if you go near them. No Wonder then if they say to such, *Stand by thy self; come not near to me; for I am a sounder Christian than thou.*

IT is little thought how much Service is done to the Devil's Interest by the prevailing Temptations to this *Spiritual Pride* that vents it self in such a Manner as this which not only tends to beget a Coldness and Indifference betwixt many of those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in Sincerity, and to foment and continue Divisions and Animosities among them: But it proves a dangerous Snare to many, who encourage themselves to conclude, that those sound and orthodox Principles (which they receiv'd perhaps they know not how) may supply the want of a Christian Practice: I wish I were not able to say, that I have sometimes known the loud and noisy Pretence

tences to a distinguish'd *Soundness* end in *Rotten Hypo-*
 at length : And yet those very Hypocrites (as they
 afterwards prov'd) were wont to villify with the
 most reproachful Names, and to represent as *greater Sin-*
ners than others, some truly Good and Upright Men,
 only because they supposed them to differ in Opinion
 from themselves. Whereas, after all, it can never be
 thought a Matter design'd by GOD, that Men should
 tune and model their Minds into an Uniformity of
 thinking, even in the deepest Truths of Religion, and
 as are the most obscurely revealed. It has been
 only said, that " so boundless is the Extent of Divine
 Truth, that it gives even an infinite Scope to a Diver-
 sity of Sentiment, and after all our most serious Search-
 es, we cannot in many things advance beyond a conje-
 ctural Probability. Why then are they to be con-
 demn'd with so much Malice and Pride, who, ha-
 ving form'd their own Judgments of Things from the
 clear Revelation of GOD's Will, direct others to search
 Scriptures with good and honest Hearts ; and (while
 they are using the best Helps that are to be had,) to be
 coloring the Illumination and Guidance of the infallible
 Spirit, who leads sincere and honest Minds into every ne-
 cessary Truth ?

THERE is one Instance more I shall name, wherein
spiritual Pride has done a great deal of Hurt, and that is,
 with respect to *Religious Conferences* : Which might be so
 managed (I hope they are by some) as to be of excellent
 use, and approved by every Good Man : But this vici-
 ous Temper of Mind that has too often appear'd in some
 of the Managers of them, and discover'd it self in the
 ways I have mention'd above, I fear has done not only a
 disgrace to such a laudable Exercise, but brought Religi-
 on it self into Contempt with many. But *I hope better*
things of you, my Brethren, and Things that accompany Sal-
vation, tho' I thus speak : And tho' thus much is proper to
 show you see what Need there is to *Watch* and *Pray* against
 Temptations to such Sins as these.

THERE

THERE is another Sort of Temptation prevail with many at this Day ; from which, Blessed be GOD you are not in Danger ; I mean the Temptation to Disloyalty, Perjury and Rebellion. You Pity and Pray those weak and ignorant Wretches, who are strangely deluded into these Horrid Crimes, by the Insinuations of crafty Men, Agents not only of a Popish Pretender, but of the *Father of Lies*, the Father of Rebellion, of Treachery and Falshood. I know you had *Hearts* to rejoice as well as a great *Occasion* for it, on that happy Solemnity that the Return of *this Day* disposes you to commend in Thankfulness to GOD, and in innocent Mirth. You show'd your Approbation, and said your *Amen*, which that beautiful Providence led me to insist on those Words of GOD by the Psalmist, and to apply them to our Rightful and Excellent Sovereign KING

Psal. 132. 17. *GEORGE*, I have ordained a Lamp
18. *mine Anointed: His Enemies will I cleanse with Shame ; but upon himself shall his CROWN flourish.*



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Religion, the very Glorings of the Graces of Ephraim are better than the Kingdom of Ashur.

If we do but make this our happy Choice--if we love Right-
 ness and hate Iniquity--if we have no Wars nor Fightings
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H. I. V. I. S.

